**Quantock Hills AONB Service**

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**2021 / 22 Business Plan**



**Supported by:**



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| Author | Iain Porter | Date | 20/01/2021 |
| Check | Chris Edwards | Status | Draft |
| **Version: 1.3**  Version History | V1.3 – incorporates feedback from CE. Minor text corrections and amendment of action LP1/1  V1.2 – includes Quantock Landscape Partnership actions  V1.1 – change of approach to delivery of LIS with allocated staff resource from within core team rather than recruitment of new post. | | |

**2021/22 Business Plan – Setting the Priorities**

1. **Priority Setting:**
   1. The Partnership is moving into the mid-point of the current AONB Management Plan phase. There are also significant national drivers (see Section 2) that may impact future work stream so the AONB is looking to deliver the Deliver Plan and AONB Management Plan while retaining sufficient flexibility to respond to these national priorities. The Partnership is keen to retain ‘on the ground’ delivery and to support the health & wellbeing and nature recovery agendas. This Business Plan looks to achieve the balance required between delivery and development, while ensuring flexibility to respond to national priorities. The priorities for 2021/22 are
      1. On the ground staff
      2. Nature Recovery
      3. Climate Change adaptation & mitigation
      4. Nautre & Wellbeing
2. **Other drivers:**
   1. National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty Review (the Landscape Review). The review reported in October 2019 with 27 proposals under five headings, landscape alive for nature and beauty, landscapes for everyone, living in landscapes, more special places and new ways of working. The Government agree with the ambitions of the review and are keen to continue to develop the proposals. One element Ministers are keen to take forward is the creation of a new National Landscapes body, with a clear steer that this body should be statutory. With an already ambitious legislation schedule the earliest that the primary legislation can go forward would be 2022/23. The Quantock Hills AONB, through the NAAONB, is engaged in the discussions on the development of the National Landscape body. Link - [Protected Landscapes Review - summary of findings](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/designated-landscapes-national-parks-and-aonbs-2018-review/landscapes-review-summary-of-findings)
   2. Colchester Declaration. The Quantock Hills, along with the other 45 AONBs of England, Wales and NI signed the Colchester Declaration in July 2019. The AONB network recognised the unprecedented concern for the future of the natural world and jointly agreed that now is the time to significantly increase the scale and nature conservation activity in AONBs. Rather than wait for a top down approach the AONBs agreed eight pledges to deliver actions on the ground and called on the English and Welsh Governments to provide the power and resources to make the targets achievable. Link - [The Colchester Declaration](https://landscapesforlife.org.uk/application/files/7815/6326/2583/The_Colchester_Declaration.pdf)
   3. Farming In Protected Landscapes. Following on from the ELMs Test & Trial work and ELM Advocacy funding allocated to protected landscapes during 2020/21 Defra has announced, through the Agricultural Transition Plan, the Future Farming and Countryside Programme for **farming in protected landscapes**. At present there is no detail on the aims of the funding or what activities can be delivered by it. Defra is aiming to publish further details in late spring, and requiring a fluid business plan to accommodate any requirements under this funding stream.
   4. 25-year Environment Plan (Defra) – Published in January 2018 the 25-year Environment Plan set the Governments agenda to be the ‘greenest’ Government ever with the environment improved and in a better condition within a generation. As with the AONB Management and Delivery Plans the Business Plan has been assessed against the 25-year Environment Plan ensuring a clear link between national strategy and local delivery. Link - [The 25 year Environment Plan](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/25-year-environment-plan/25-year-environment-plan-our-targets-at-a-glance)
   5. Defra grant. Defra have indicated that they will be looking at the grant funding of protected landscapes, prior to a full response to the Landscapes Review. Defra have indicated that protected landscape should assume that the core budget will be at the same level as 2020/21 and that 5% of that budget allocation will come from a dedicated Biodiversity Fund and will need to be allocated to biodiversity work.
   6. Funding and Income. The Quantock Hills AONB Partnership has been carefully managing it’s budgets, especially since 2009, to allow delivery while absorbing a number of funding cuts from partners. Over the last four years this has meant a decrease in the ‘reserves’ held by the Partnership. This continued decrease in the reserves is not sustainable and at the November 2019 JAC it was agreed to set up a Funding & Income Task & Finish Group to investigate the expenditure, business model and income with the aim of producing a more sustainable business model. Due to the uncertainties of the drivers listed above the group only started in mid-2020
   7. Covid-19 Pandemic. In December 2019 the Covid-19 virus was first detected in the UK. During 2020 the virus continued to infect large numbers of people leading to a number of national and local ‘lockdowns’. These imposed restrictions on every aspect of life including ways of working. Face to face engagement work was heavily impacted as was the ability to deliver land management work, especially where volunteers were involved. At the time of writing Government has just released details of their February 2021 “roadmap” out of pandemic restrictions however the ability to deliver engagement work will be affected by future potential restrictions.
3. **Delivery Mechanisms**
   1. The AONB Service core team will remain at the 2020/21 level and will be responsible for delivery of the Business Plan (Table 1).
   2. Quantock Landscape Partnership Scheme (QLPS). The QLPS is a £2.6m scheme with 23 projects to be delivered over five years from 01/04/2020 – 31/03/2025. The scheme has received a grant from the National Lottery Heritage Fund (NLHF) of £1.9m with other match funding from National Trust, EDF, the AONB Service and Friends of Quantock. Hosted by the AONB Service, the scheme is fully staffed and will be delivering on AONB Management Plan objectives where they align with the Landscape Character Action Plan (LCAP). The project area is twice that of the AONB and much of the delivery will be in areas surrounding the AONB. Link - [QLPS, Quantock Landscape Partnership Scheme](https://qlps.org/)
   3. Several project-based bids are currently being developed. For clarity, where actions are expected to be delivered through these projects, they have been highlighted in blue. This allows assessment of actions which may not go forward if the funding bids are unsuccessful.

Table 1 AONB team structure 2020/21.

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| **AONB Core Team** | **FTE** | **Function** |
| AONB Manager | 1 | Day to day management of the team, developing AONB policy, commenting on behalf of JAC on statutory consultations and ensuring good working practices with all partnerships. Lead on Management Plan review. |
| Development Officer | 1 | Develops and delivers the action plan through the AONB team, external contractors and organisations. Seeks external funding opportunities to implement projects which deliver the statutory AONB Management Plan. Develops income streams which will support the funding of the AONB Partnership and Service. |
| Landscape Planning Officer | 0.4 | This post develops comments and guidance on planning and links with the local planning authorities to ensure that any development is sensitive to the needs of the AONB landscape. |
| Ranger | 1 | Key role is recreation and access, heritage and land management. Also undertakes project development and delivery, especially working with local communities. |
| Partnership Ranger (shared) | 0.4 | Key role includes events and recreation management and delivery. Also undertakes delivery on SWHT amenity land and visitor management |
| Volunteer Coordinator (shared) | 0.5 | To develop volunteering opportunities, including enhancement of the existing joint Quantock volunteer group. |
| Support & Communication Officer | 0.8 | Role includes producing all literature, digital media, managing the AONB website and dealing with media enquiries |
| **Total FTE** | **5.1** |  |
|  | | |
| **Quantock Landscape Partnership Scheme** | | |
| QLPS Manager | 1.0 | Overall responsibility for delivery of the QLPS and line management of QLPS staff. Reports to the QLPS board. |
| Community Engagement & Volunteering Officer | 1.0 | Leads on community and event projects with responsibility for recruitment and management of volunteers (through QLPS). |
| Natural Heritage Officer | 1.0 | Responsible for delivery of the natural heritage-based projects. |
| Historic Heritage Officer | 1.0 | Responsible for delivery of the historic heritage-based projects |
| Project Support Assistant | 0.6 | Responsible for day to day financial management and procurement, event bookings, website and social media content and support staff team. |
| **QLPS FTE** | **4.6** |  |
| **Overall FTE** | **9.7** |  |

1. **Quantock Hills budget 2021/22**
2. Table 2 shows the summary budget for 2021/22 based on indicative contribution figures supplied by the AONB partners at the January Officers Working Group. The funding will not be confirmed until March 2021 by local authority funding partners. Defra contribution (grant) is estimated at 2020 amounts and it is expected to be confirmed in March 2021. A full budget can be found in Appendix 1.
3. Project development will look to attract external funding for projects identified in the Unit Work Plan (section 5).
4. As a condition of the Statement of Intent (a requirement of the Defra grant) the AONB Service is required to hold an earmarked reserve which is to be used in the event of redundancies. This limits further financial liability from the partners. This is shown as a separate budget line and is not available as discretionary funds. It is updated annually and needs to cover 50% of the whole team being made compulsorily redundant.
5. The budget will deliver the Unit Work Plan (Section 5) which will work to the priorities identified in Section 1 in delivery of the Quantock Hills AONB Management Plan 2019-24. To this extent continued funding has been identified for a Volunteer Coordinator post and volunteer activities.
6. The budget shows income against Cost Recovery. This is primarily recharge for services or management fees where the AONB Service is hosting joint projects. The cost recovery elements are for land management activity such as swaling which the AONB Service undertakes on Quantock Common SSSI. For 2021/22 the AONB Service will operate a cost recovery system, though not necessarily full-cost, for any scheme where it is asked to undertake swaling. There is also recharge against the Amenity Land budget for management of Cothelstone Hill, Lydeard Hill car park and Triscombe car park on behalf of South West Heritage Trust and SCC.
7. Since 2015 the AONB Service has delivered the Greater Quantock Landscape Development Fund (GQLDF) and the Quantock Landscape Improvement Scheme (QLIS). Both these schemes are funded through the S106 / DCO associated with Hinkley Point C. The AONB Service is able to recharge for staff time in delivery of these scheme or directly employ a project officer to deliver them. This again is a funded element under the S106 / DCO. To ensure successful completion of the schemes within the timescales and budgets the AONB Service is looking to allocated 06 FTE of the Development Officer resource for the next financial year. The position will be reviewed in autumn 2021 to ascertain whether the employment of a project officer will still allow delivery of the schemes and increase flexibility within the core team.
8. The Blackdown Hills AONB recharge is for the Volunteer Coordinator post. This is a joint post with Quantock and Blackdown Hills AONB. Quantock Hills will retain budget and line management with day to day supervision undertaken by the local AONB officer. The Forestry England recharge is for the Partnership Ranger post, employed by the AONB Service and managed jointly with Forestry England.

Table 2: Quantock Hills AONB Service Budget 2021 – 22 (summary) – TO BE CONFIRMED APRIL 2021

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| **Budget Heading** | **Expenditure** | **Income** | **Balance** | **Notes** |
| Core | 281,886 | -285,940 | -4,054 |  |
| AONB Project | 93,650 | 93,650 | 0 |  |
| HPC Landscape & Visual Scheme | 85,000 | -85,000 | 0 | Ringfenced with income from S106 HPC funding |
| Quantock Landscape Ptn Scheme | 541,824 | -541,824 | 0 | Ringfenced, April 2020 – March 2025 |
| Amenity Land | 2,000 | -11,910 | -9,910 | Ringfenced for land management activities on SWHT land holdings within the Quantock Hills. |
| RIA | 0 | -24,984 | -24,984 | Brought forward from 2020/21 |
| **Total** | **1,004,360** | **1,043,308** | **-38,948** |  |
| *Earmarked reserves* | | | *19,000* | 50% of whole core team redundancy costs (figure tbc by SCC HR) |
| *Carry forward (2022/23)* | | | *-19,948* | Surplus |

1. **Unit Work Plan 2021/22 (by post).** 
   1. The Unit Work Plan below identifies delivery against Defra core duties of an AONB Unit (Appendix 2) and Management Policies. The table is broken down by post though some will be delivered direct by AONB Staff, partners and contractors. With some items there will be more than one post associated with delivery, but the first post listed will be the lead on that item of work.
   2. The Unit Work Plan also identifies delivery associated with some projects that are currently in development or going through an application. If these applications are unsuccessful the associated delivery will not occur. These actions are in blue shaded boxes.
   3. The Quantock Landscape Partnership Scheme is hosted by the Quantock Hills AONB service. It will be delivering 23 projects under the Quantock Landscape Character Action Plan (LCAP) and reports to an independent board. Many of the projects meet AONB Management Plan objectives and Defra themes. Table 4 summaries the annual work programme for the QLPS.

Key

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| AONB Manager | AM | Development Officer | DO |
| Landscape Planning Officer | LPO | Ranger | R |
| Partnership Ranger | PR | Volunteer Coordinator | VC |
| Support & Communications Officer | SO |  |  |

Table 3 Quantock Hills AONB Service 2020/21 Unit Work Plan

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| **LANDSCAPE CHARACTER & QUALITY** | | | | | | |
| **MP Act** | **Defra theme** | **Core Functions** | **Action** | **Milestone / Target** | **AONB Lead / support** | **Resource** |
| LP1/1 | 6 | B D | Evidence from Local Planning Authorities demonstrating due regard. | Information included in JAC reports | AM / LPO |  |
| LP1/2 | 2 | G C | Contact relevant landowners and develop a scheme of work as basis of LEI bid | Bid submitted | DO |  |
| LP1/3 | 4 | F | Complete fixed-point photography for 2020 | Take photographs from 12 sites during 2021 | R / DO |  |
| LP1/5 | 2 | B | Undertake consultation on the special qualities of the Quantock Hills in respect of Nature Recovery planning | Nature Recovery Plan draft produced for consultation | DO / AM |  |
| LP2/2 | 1 | G I | Deliver Greater Quantock Landscape Development Fund discretionary fund providing grants to landowners & communities to deliver landscape enhancement projects | Applications developed, processed and approved by panel | DO |  |
| LP2/3 | 4 | C G I J | Input into events under Quantock Facilitation Fund. | 8 events undertaken | DO |  |
| LP3/1 | 4 | B | Undertake public events promoting special qualities of the Quantock Hills. Due to Covid-19 pandemic these events may be face-to-face or virtual. | Events programme run with 12 events. | AM / SO – other staff as appropriate |  |
| LP3/1 | 4 | B C | Promote activities by other organisations where they promote the special qualities of the Quantock Hills | All relevant events, where notified, promoted via AONB website and SM feeds | SO |  |
| LP3/2 | 4 | B | Publish SM / blog on project delivery supporting landscape strength / character | 20 SM / blog feeds | SO – other staff as appropriate |  |
| LP4/2 | 4 | B | Include a section on the Quantock Hills AONB website about Landscape Character Assessments and their use in supporting planning and nature recovery | Landscape Character Assessment section on AONB website | SO / AM / LPO |  |
| LP5/2 | 6 | G K | Assess requirement to renew arrange for pre-application advice to local planning authorities. | Decision reached 31/10/2020 | AM / LPO |  |

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| **LAND MANAGEMENT: FARMING, FORESTRY & CATCHMENT** | | | | | | |
| **MP Act** | **Defra theme** | **Core Functions** | **Action** | **Milestone / Target** | **AONB Lead / support** | **Resource** |
| LMP 1/1 | 1 | C | Deliver Level Up sub-project to enhance and increase resilience of SAC woodlands | Project completed | DO |  |
| LMP 1/5 | 1 | C | Deliver Level Up sub-project to enhance 2 acidic mires on Quantock Common | 2 mires enhanced to NE requirements | DO / PR |  |
| LMP 1/6 | 1 | C | Support QCA in delivery of HLS on Quantock Common SSSI, source funding for scrub removal | Swaling & scrub management undertaken to NE prescription | DO / R / PR |  |
| LMP 2/3 | 1 | C G J | Engage with tree planting initiatives supporting community planting schemes utilising funding sources such as the 2SP and SRA. | 2 tree regeneration / planting schemes supported | DO |  |
| LMP3/4 | 1 | C | Provide 3rd party grants through the GQLDF for hedge management and planting schemes | Applications processed and decision given within 14 days of receipt. GQLDF fully committed by March 2021. | DO |  |
| LMP 4/2 | 4 | C | Ensure woodland management events undertaken as part of the QFF event programme | 2 events run under QFF cover woodland management topics | DO / FWAG-SW |  |
| LMP 5/1 | 1 | F G | As part of the Nature Recovery Plan development include connectivity mapping | Datasets / GIS layers created and available with final report | AM / FWAG-SW |  |
| LMP 5/2 | 4 | C | Promote opportunities for woodland creation through CS and ensure inclusion in QFF events | 2 woodland creation schemes approved | DO / R |  |
| LMP1/6 | 1 | C G | Quantock Common - Undertake scrub heath management programme as agreed by QCMG and approved by NE | Agreed annual scrub heath management programme competed. | R / PR / DO |  |
| LMP2 | 1 | C I | Undertake land management activities on SWHT and FoQ land holdings | Regular audits completed. Work programme for CS and HLS completed | DO / R / PR |  |
| LMP4/2 | 4 | B J | Support Building Resilience Project in delivery of workshops / training opportunities for volunteers | 4 volunteers engaged in workshops / training events | VC / vols |  |

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| **BIODIVERSITY: WILDLIFE & HABITATS** | | | | | | |
| **MP Act** | **Defra theme** | **Core Functions** | **Action** | **Milestone / Target** | **AONB Lead / support** | **Resource** |
| BWHP 4/2 | 1 | G | Landscape Improvement Scheme: Undertake ground preparation at Ramscombe to create open areas. | 12Ha managed as open areas with aim of creation of extensive species rich grassland and native scrub. | DO / FE |  |
| BWHP 2/2 | 1 | B F J | Deliver Quantock Bat Monitoring programme ensuring 6 transects are completed | 6 transect records analysed and submitted to NMBP | DO |  |
| BWHP 2/2 | 1 | F J | Deliver Quantock Butterfly Monitoring programme ensuring 2 transects are complete | 2 transect records submitted | VC |  |
| BWHP2/2 | 1 | F J | Deliver Dormouse monitoring scheme for Cothelstone Hill | Dormouse monitoring carried out as part of PTES national monitoring programme. | R / PR |  |
| BWHP 2/2 | 1 | F J | Lead on the annual Quantock deer count | Annual deer count completed and figures available to the public. | R / PR |  |
| BWHP 2/2 | 1 | F | Support monitoring of pied flycatchers on Quantock Hills and feed into regional project on effects of climate change on indicator species | Monitoring of 150 boxes in key location throughout AONB | PR / R |  |
| BWHP2/2 | 1 | F J | Undertake annual nightjar monitoring of Quantock Common and adjacent land of interest | 10km grid squares monitored annually | PR |  |
| BWHP 4/1 | 1 | B F | Screen woodland management plans ensuring opportunities for broadleaf conversion or creation of open ground is realised. | All consulted WMP screened and relevant comments submitted | DO / LPO |  |

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| **HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT & CULTURAL INFLUENCES** | | | | | | |
| **MP Act** | **Defra theme** | **Core Functions** | **Action** | **Milestone / Target** | **AONB Lead / support** | **Resource** |
| HEP1/2 | 5 | J | Investigate potential to support the Somerset Highways Parish Signs project by approach to SCC highways | Support, if appropriate, provided to parish volunteers | VC |  |
| HEP3/1 | 5 | J | Support the Heritage Monitoring Volunteer Group enabling them to undertake SM monitoring | All SM’s surveyed in summer and winter months | VC |  |
| HEP3/1 | 4 | B J | Publish and promote results of SM monitoring | Pdf summary of survey available Dece 2020 and posted on website. | VC |  |

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| **GEOLOGY & CLIMATE** | | | | | | |
| **MP Act** | **Defra theme** | **Core Functions** | **Action** | **Milestone / Target** | **AONB Lead / support** | **Resource** |
| GCP3/1 | 1 | F J | Ensure climate change adaptation is built into the Quantock Hills Nature Recovery Plan | Project plan developed with delivery timetabled for 2021 – 23. | DO / AM |  |

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| **DEVELOPMENT PLANNING & INFRASTRUCTURE** | | | | | | |
| **MP Act** | **Defra theme** | **Core Functions** | **Action** | **Milestone / Target** | **AONB Lead / support** | **Resource** |
| DPIP 1/1 | 6 | K | Screen all relevant forward planning strategies and submit comments to ensure AONB special character is conserved and enhanced | All relevant forward planning strategies comments on. | LPO / AM |  |
| DPIP 1/2 | 6 | K | Ensure resources available to respond to LPA forward planning strategies | All relevant forward planning strategies commented on | AM |  |
| DPIP1/2 | 6 | D K | Screen and collate planning applications for consideration by AONB Service / partnership | All relevant planning applications forward to LPO | SO |  |
| DPIP 2/1 | 6 | K | Comment on relevant development applications | All relevant planning applications comments on | LPO |  |
| DPIP1/2 | 6 | D K | Collate metric on planning applications within AONB | Metrics presented by LPO in annual report | LPO / SO |  |
| DPIP 5/2 | 6 | K | Run annual workshop for LPS planning staff in partnership with other Somerset AONBs | Annual workshop undertaken | LPO / AM / SO |  |

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| **LOCAL ECONOMY & VISITORS** | | | | | | |
| **MP Act** | **Defra theme** | **Core Functions** | **Action** | **Milestone / Target** | **AONB Lead / support** | **Resource** |
| LEVP 1/2 | 4 | G J | Use Quantock Facilitation Fund to undertake event on diversification opportunities through Agricultural Transition Plan | Access agreement in place with main user groups | AM / DO |  |

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| **ACCESS, RECREATION & WELLBEING** | | | | | | |
| **MP Act** | **Defra theme** | **Core Functions** | **Action** | **Milestone / Target** | **AONB Lead / support** | **Resource** |
| ARWP 1/1 | 4 | G J | Engage new SNC project through membership of Executive board. | Membership of SNC executive board and attendance at meetings | AM |  |
| ARWP1/1 | 4 | B J | Support new Somerset Natural Connections (SNC) projects linking projects with core AONB work | Regular liaison with SNC project staff | VC / SNC |  |
| ARWP 1/2 | 5 | J | Ensure all volunteer role descriptions provide accessibility requirements. Investigate potential new roles that allow for participation by those with restricted mobility | All role descriptions reviewed and updated as necessary | VC |  |
| ARWP1/3 | 5 | B J | Work with SNC project to develop further volunteering opportunities that enhance wellbeing of participants. | One volunteer group set up from ‘missing group’ population. | VC / SNC |  |
| ARWP3/1 | 3 | I | Undertake access audit of 1 Quantock location (Cothelstone Hill) and produce an access plan | Access plan produced and finding published on website. | R / SWHT |  |
| ARWP3/2 | 4 | B | Ensure information from staff / organisations which will increase accessibility of AONB to individuals and groups, especially those considered to be missing groups, is promoted via website, e-newsletter and SM feeds | Assessment of existing information undertaken and reported back to AM by Dec20 | SO |  |
| ARWP 3/3 | 3 | I | Undertake audit of AONB promoted routes | Annual access audit of AONB promoted routes completed. Action plan produced and works undertaken | PR / R |  |
| ARWP 3/4 | 5 | D J | Attend Coleridge Way Steering Group meeting representing QHAONB | Attendance at all Coleridge Way Steering Group meetings | R |  |
| ARWP 4/1 | 4 | I | Coordinate event notification (groups >20 per) for the Quantock Hills | All notified events assessed and appropriate advice given. Promotion of event notification process sent to relevant organisations | PR / SO |  |
| ARWP 4/2 | 5 | C D | Provide secretariat and be AONB lead on Police & Conservation Agencies Working Group | 2 PCAWG meetings held | R / SO |  |

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| **COMMUNITY & VOLUNTEERING** | | | | | | |
| **MP Act** | **Defra theme** | **Core Functions** | **Action** | **Milestone / Target** | **AONB Lead / support** | **Resource** |
| CVP 1/1 | 1 2 | I J | Secure external funding for provision of discretionary grants pot available to parish councils and community groups | Discretionary Grant fund secured | DO |  |
| CVP 1/2 | 1 2 | J | Support parish / community groups to secure funding for projects which support Management Plan implementation | Within resources parish / community group projects supported. | DO |  |
| CVP 2/1 | 6 | K | Undertake screening of relevant Community and Neighbourhood Plans and direct resources to respond as required | All relevant Community and Neighbourhood Plans screened. | AM / LPO |  |
| CVP3/1 | 5 | C J | VOLUNTEERS – engage with tasks for QCV (joint group) | Leading 4 QCV tasks based on AONB tasks | R / VC |  |
| CVP3/1 | 5 | C J | VOLUNTEERS – Ensure volunteer involvement in local events and other visitor management to raise AONB profile |  | VC / R |  |
| CVP3 | 5 | J | Support Quantock Commons Management Group by attending meetings when appropriate | Attendance at 2 QCMG meetings / site visits | R / PR |  |
| CVP3 | 5 | J | Support Quantock Deer Management & Conservation Group | Provide advice and support to QDMCG | SO / R / PR |  |
| CVP3/1 | 5 | J | Support existing AONB led volunteer groups to ensure training, support, equipment and materials are provided | VR, WMV, HMV, ET, CEV groups all supported with same level of outputs. | VC |  |
| CVP3/1 | 5 | J | Undertake informal assessment of volunteering requirements to allow AONB unit to resource volunteering | Assessment report completed Nov21 | VC / DO |  |
| CVP3/2 | 5 | J | Engage with Somerset Nature Connections project team to ensure synergies in volunteering opportunities for health & wellbeing activities |  | VC |  |

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| **PUBLIC UNDERSTANDING & INFORMATION** | | | | | | |
| **MP Act** | **Defra theme** | **Core Functions** | **Action** | **Milestone / Target** | **AONB Lead / support** | **Resource** |
| PUP1/1 | 4 | B | Run one SM campaign based on Communication Plan requirement, ensuring staff and partners engage | One SM campaign undertaken. | SO |  |
| PUIP 1/2 | 4 | B | Organise and run training on SM use for AONB Team to increase targeted SM delivery | All AONB Team to undertake SM training | SO |  |
| LMP4/2 | 4 | B C | Support Plantlife’s Building Resilience Project through project promotion and staff resources for training and delivery | Support for 2 forest bathing sessions or public events | NW / PR |  |
| PUP2/1 | 4 | B J | Run annual photographic competition on agreed theme | Photographic competition run | SO |  |
| LP3/1 | 5 | B J | Support volunteer rangers to deliver public walks and events promoting the special qualities of the AONB. | Volunteer Rangers lead 4 walks and attend 3 shows / events | VC / vols |  |
| PUP3/2 | 4 | B | Promote Plantlife’s Building Resilience Project to Quantock schools | All Plantlife school’s activity promoted to Quantock schools | SO |  |

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| **CORE DUTIES / PARTNERSHIP MANAGEMENT** | | | | |
| **Action** | **Milestone / Target** | **AONB Lead / support** | **Resource** |
| OWG and JAC reports produced. These reports will provide monitoring against the action plan targets | 4 OWG reports and 4 JAC reports produced. | AM / DO / R / LPO |  |
| Host 4 OWG and JAC meetings – April, July, November and February 2014 to allow informed and engaged ownership of partnership by JAC. | 4 OWG meetings held.  4 JAC meeting held | AM / SA / DO / R / PR / LP |  |
| Write /DEFRA AONB bid with input from OWG and JAC partnership. | DEFRA bid accepted | DO / AM |  |
| Develop new business opportunities through joint working with relevant groups / organisations. Include development of non-exchequer income generation. | Partnership approval for adoption of income streams. | DO / AM |  |
| Through the Income & Funding Work Group ensure sustainable income / expenditure model is developed taking account of Landscape Review response from Government | Scenarios developed and consulted on by July 2021 | DO / AM |  |
| Pilot ‘Honesty Box’ visitor giving scheme at key locations | Assessment over income vs resource March 2022 | AM / DO |  |
| Regular meetings of AONB Service team to review AONB Management activities and issues | 12 meetings held. | All team 3 days each |  |
| Membership and involvement in the NAAONB to ensure national and regional liaison and to ensure that the NAAONB represents the views of the Quantock Hills partnership | Attendance at Lead Officers meetings and other meetings where applicable | AM / DO / LPO |  |
| Annual risk assessment reviews, instigate new H&S procedures in line with good practice. |  | DO / AM |  |
| Undertake finance monitoring and provide reports in various formats to partners, hosts and grant giving organisations |  | AM / DO |  |
| 1-1 management meetings, annual PRaD meetings staff management |  | AM / DO |  |
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Table 4. Quantock Landscape Partnership Scheme. Annual Work Programme. TO BE UPDATED BY QLPS

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Defra theme** | **Defra duty** | **Workstream** | **Activity** | **Milestone / Target** |
|  |  | Scheme Management | Induct replacement Natural Heritage Officer, Recruit seasonal events officer (4 posts, 3.2 fte) | NHO due to start by May, events officer will be in post for 12 weeks during the June – Sept period, exact dates tba |
|  |  | Office. Sign lease, install connections, install furniture, | Office lease signed – May 2021  Office ready for use by June |
|  |  | Update website and Social Media | On going |
|  |  | Maintain evaluation records and report | On going |
|  |  | Quarterly claims and reporting to NLHF, reporting to Partnership Board meetings | Quarterly, claims submitted within 3 weeks of end of quarter, meetings held within 5 weeks of end of quarter. |
| 4 | B | 1.2 Digital Landscapes | Run photographic competition. | Will open by Easter 2021 assuming lockdown has ended. |
| 4 | B | 1.3 Romantic Poets | 12 schools workshops per term, initially virtually but hopefully on site by Autumn term. | Workshop programme being delivered on schedule. |
| 4 | B | 1.4 Quantock Connections | A variety of inclusive activities targeted a disadvantaged communities and individuals. | 2 youth camping trips, 2 urban nature activity programmes for young people, 7 community day trips, full events programme as Covid restrictions ease |
| 4 | J | 1.5 Young Rangers | Commission provider to run programme with delivery expected to start Sept 2021. Programme will recruit and run activities for 2 groups of 12 – 16 yrs olds from disadvantaged areas in Taunton and Bridgwater | Commission provider by June 2021, programme starts autumn 2020 |
| 4 | B | 1.7 Events | Activities programme with partners to be started spring 2021. | 30 events/activities for individuals and the same for families |
| 4 | J | 1.8 Quantock Futures | Run workshops that will explore community / stakeholders perception of changes to Quantock ecosystem / habitats due to climate change | Commission facilitator by June 2021 with first workshops in Autumn. |
| 1 | C | 2.1 Follies and Features | Revised planning and s38 application for Creation of new car park at Crowcombe Park Gate.  Undertake works on 3 SMs currently on the At Risk register | Crowcombe Park Gate Project delivered  3 SMs restored |
| 1 5 | C J | 2.2 hedges | Recruitment of volunteers to undertake hedgerow surveys. Survey hedgerows. Trial stretch of beech hedgebank restored | Volunteers recruited. 4 parishes surveye. 6 hedgerow restoration/creation projects completed. 100m of beech hedgebank restored. |
| 5 | F J | 2.4 wild verges | Volunteers recruited to repeat surveys undertaken | 13 sites surveyed |
| 1 | C | 2.5 Dormice | Coppicing at Cothelstone | 2021 coppicing programme completed. |
| 1 | C | 2.6 orchards | Provision of grants allows landowners to restore and plant up new orchards | 1 new orchard planted |
| 1 | C J | 2.7 Community Woodlands | Enrichment planting and glade restoration at Broomfield | Year 2 of woodland management plan completed at Broomfield Common and Cothelstone Hill |
| 5 | J | 2.8 Monitoring volunteers | Set up and recruit volunteers for the Historic Heritage projects. | Train vols and start programmes for a range of natural and historic heritage monitoring programmes. |
| 3 | B | 2.10 Quantock Walking | Develop parish paths circular walking routes  Undertake repairs on paths in support of the parish paths | 4 parish path routes agreed  Works required for 4 parish paths completed |
| 1 | C F | 3.1 Trees in the Landscape | Start survey of landscape trees. Start analysis of historic records of hedgerows and parkland trees | Analysis of historic records completed for at least 1 estate and 1 parish |
| 2 5 | B | 3.2 Quantock memories | Undertake training for volunteers to be able to do interviews. Start interview programme | Training and interviews Jan – March 2022 |
| 2 | B | 3.3 Stories of the Hills | Deliver programme of events, community workshops, and celebrations | Commission provider by June 2021, deliver programme by March 2022 |
| 2 | B | 3.4 Archives | Start archive analysis as soon as SWHT reopens | Covid dependant. |
| 2 | J | 3.5 Archaeology | Analyse results of LiDAR survey. Undertake Cothelstone excavation, geophys, test pits, and community fieldwalking projects | LiDAR data assessed.  5 public archaeology projects completed |

**Appendix 1: Quantock Hills AONB Service – detailed budget 2021/22**

Notes:

1. Somerset County Council (SCC) hosts the Quantock Hills and their contribution to AONB budgets is shown at the bottom of each budget line. This is a feature of their procurement and finance system.
2. Descriptions of line items are provided by SCC and fixed. Therefore some items of expenditure may not match the description accurately
3. RIA, Project and Quantock LPS budgets estimated as 2020/21 final year figures will be fixed 5th April 2021. As these budget all involved funding across financial years the outrun on 2020/21 budgets will impact the 2021/22 budgets.

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| **CORE BUDGET** | | **2021/22** | **Comments** |
| APT & C-Pay | | 174,070 | Salaries |
| APT & C-Add Hours | | 7,262 | Additional Payments to Rangers |
| APT & C-NI | | 16,539 | National Insurance. Based on SCC HR advice |
| APT & C-LG Pen | | 32,821 | Pension. Based on SCC HR advice |
| LG ERS Def Red Cont | |  | SCC contribution increased to cover Pension Deficit cost |
| Apprenticeship Levy | | 864 |  |
| Staff Training | | 1,500 |  |
| Electricity | | 400 |  |
| NNDR - Rates | | 1,500 |  |
| Rents | | 9,300 | Office rent = £6,300, depot rent = £3,000 |
| Water Charges | | 150 |  |
| Car allowance | | 1,000 |  |
| Travel costs | | 600 |  |
| Vehicle Contract Hire | | 12,000 | New vehicle lease 2021. Assumed cost £6k per vehicle |
| Vehicle costs - Fuel | | 2,000 |  |
| Vehicle costs - Tyres | | 200 |  |
| Vehicle costs - Licence | | 200 |  |
| Vehicle costs - Insurance | | 1,500 |  |
| Vehicle costs - Maintenance | | 1,200 |  |
| Equipment | | 2,000 |  |
| Equipment R&M | | 500 |  |
| Clothing & Uniform | | 500 |  |
| Postage | | 200 |  |
| Stationary | | 800 |  |
| Printing | | 150 |  |
| Equip ICT - Tel/pg | | 920 | SHIELD lone working system |
| Telephone - calls | | 600 |  |
| Telephone - mobiles | | 640 |  |
| Hospitality | | 500 |  |
| Subsistence | | 100 |  |
| Subscriptions | | 2,750 | NAAONB subscription £2656 / Europarc Atlantic Isles £90 |
| Internal - Insurance | | 670 | PLI = £250 / ELI = £340 / Property = £80 |
| Publicity & Promotion | | 200 | websites |
| Research & Development | | 0 |  |
| Cross Service Recharges | | 8,250 | Management Fee to SCC |
| Grant - Defra | | -166,300 | Defra AONB Grant - estimated |
| Contributions - OLA | | -12,240 | Sedgemoor District Council – core contribution |
| Contributions - OLA | | -12,240 | Somerset West & Taunton Council – core contribution |
| Fees & Charges | | -1,000 | FoQ Contribution |
| Fees & Charges | | -300 | Cost Recovery - swaling |
| Fees & Charges | | -6,000 | Cost Recovery - LMSS Projects |
| Fees & Charges | | -13,900 | Recharge - Blackdown Hills AONB |
| Fees & Charges | | -21,788 | Recharge - Forestry Commission |
| Fees & Charges | | -500 | Income from AONB run events |
| Cross-Service | | 0 | Moved RIA to core |
| Cross-Service | | -30,000 | Cost Recovery – HPC landscape schemes (0.6FTE of D'ment Officer) |
| **OUTRUN CORE** | | **17,618** |  |
| *SCC core contribution* | | *-20,808* |  |
| *SCC pension + Apprentice levy* | | *-864* |  |
| *SCC* | | *-21,672* |  |
| *Balance (Core)* | | *-4,054* |  |

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| **Project Budget** | | **2021/22** | **Comments** |
| Fees & Hired | | 43,300 | Contribution to SNC Project |
| F&H - Prof/Tech Service | | 2,350 | Level Up Project |
| Contractors | | 48,000 | Level Up Project |
| Contributions - Others | | -30,000 | Somerset Community Foundation (SNC project) |
| Fees & Charges | | -50,350 | National Lottery Heritage Fund (Levels Up) |
| **OUTRUN PROJECTS** | | **13,300** |  |
| *SCC Contribution* | | *-13,300* | *Improving lives to reduce demand funding - SNC* |
| *Balance (Project)* | | *0* |  |
|  | |  |  |
|  |
| **Receipts in Advance** | | **2021/22** | **Comments** |
| Cross Service Recharges | | 0 |  |
| Grant - Defra | | -24,984 | Surplus brought forward from 2020/21 |
| **OUTRUN RIA** | | **-24,984** |  |
|  | |  |  |
|  |
| **Landscape & Visual Schemes** | | **2021/22** | **Comments** |
| Contractors | | 65,000 | Landscape Improvement Schemes |
| F&H - Prof/Tech Serv | | 20,000 | GQLDF Grants |
| Cross-Service | | -85,000 | Income from SCC (HPC) |
| **OUTRUN HPC** | | **0** |  |
|  | |  |  |
|  |
| **Land Management** | | **2021/22** | **Comments** |
| Contractors | | 2,000 | Cothelstone Hill land management works |
| GrantGovtOutsideAEF | | -5,110 | Environmental Stewardship Scheme income |
| Grant - Defra | | -3,000 | Basic Payment Scheme |
| **OUTRUN LAND MANAGEMENT** | | **-6,110** |  |
|  | |  |  |
|  |
| **Quantock Landscape Partnership** | | **2021/22** | **Comments** |
| APT & C-Pay | | 121,965 | Salaries |
| APT & C-NI | | 10,170 | Based on SCC HR advice |
| APT & C-LG Pen | | 22,075 | Based on SCC HR advice |
| Apprenticeship Levy | | 564 | Estimate |
| Staff Training | | 2,300 |  |
| Rents | | 4,500 |  |
| Car allowance | | 2,000 |  |
| Travel costs | | 450 |  |
| Equipment | | 10,000 |  |
| Equipment R&M | | 500 |  |
| Reprographics - photocopy/printing | | 2,000 |  |
| Postage | | 100 |  |
| Stationary | | 200 |  |
| Telephone - calls | | 288 | Shield lone working @ £24 / mth |
| Telephone - mobiles | | 480 | £120/mobile |
| Cost of Meetings (External) | | 5,000 |  |
| Fees & Hired | | 150,000 |  |
| F&H - Prof/Tech Serv | | 70,000 |  |
| Ctrctrs (Not 3rd Part) | | 133,751 |  |
| Internal - Insurance | | 480 | Est PLI - £200 / ELI - £240 / Property - £40 |
| Research & Development | | 5,000 |  |
| Fees & Charges | | -365,785 | Heritage Lottery Fund Grant |
| Fees & Charges | | 0 |  |
| Fees & Charges | | -6,600 | Historic England for grants on Scheduled Monuments |
| Fees & Charges | | -10,000 | Friends of Quantock |
| Fees & Charges | | -2,400 | Income from events |
| Fees & Charges | | -6,250 | Landowner Contributions |
| Cross Service | | -4,000 | Countryside Stewardship |
| Cross Service | | -146,789 | brought forward 2020/21 |
| **OUTRUN HLF** | | **0** |  |
|  | |  |  |
| **Quantock AONB Budgets Outrun** | | **-35,148** |  |
| Earmarked Reserves | | 19,000 | Earmarked Reserves to cover 50% redundancy costs of entire core team |
| *Surplus* | | *-16,148* |  |

**Appendix 2: Defra’s Core duties of an AONB Unit**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Core function** | **Explanation** |
| a) Developing reviewing, preparing and publishing the AONB vision and the CRoW Act AONB Management Plan | The management plan is the most significant statutory duty placed upon Local Authorities and in turn AONB managers by the 2000 CRoW Act. Its preparation and review should involve local stakeholders. |
| b) Raising awareness of the AONB, and promoting the AONB vision and the management plan to help distinguish the AONB from adjacent countryside | Raising awareness of the AONB and its special characteristics. Promoting the partnership’s vision of the AONB’s future and the plan for securing it. The output could be a glossy publication, a series of promotional events, a local media campaign or any combination of these. The vision needs to explain why the AONB is important and why special management measures are needed to protect and enhance it. |
| c) Advising upon, facilitating and co-ordinating implementation by others of the Management Plan | Taking positive steps to support the implementation of the actions in the management plan including getting other local and regional stakeholders to play their part too. It will be important to assess performance locally of CRoW Act ‘relevant bodies’ in respect section 85 of the Act. |
| d) Advising Local Authorities on their activities within AONBs, to encourage them to go beyond normal levels of service(attain the highest possible standards) in countryside management | This is a nationally significant landscape attracting central as well as local government resources for its continued protection. LA countryside management, rights of way, planning, and other relevant services affecting it need to be encouraged to “go the extra mile” to conserve, enhance and celebrate the special qualities of the AONB in decision making and through prioritising funding to ensure investment in ongoing sensitive management. |
| e) Monitoring and reporting on progress against AONB Management Plan targets | At the end of the year a published report on progress and achievement of the AONB team against agreed targets is needed. It will enable you to claim credit for success, and can be used to assure funders that AONB funds are being well used and to support fundraising efforts. |
| f) Monitoring AONB landscape condition | A key activity but one which will run over a long period and will enable an assessment of whether the AONB Management Plan is delivering the LA statutory duty to conserve and enhance the AONB. |
| g) Accessing resources for management activities | Identifying and making use of a wide range of funding opportunities and securing non financial assistance for the delivery of any AONB purposes. |
| h) Working with and contributing to the NAAONB activities, Participating in and promoting joint working between AONBs and across protected landscapes family. | Using training and developmental opportunities (e.g. workshops, seminars, NAAONB conference), sharing good practice. Seeking opportunities for collaborative working with other protected landscapes, Contributing to objectives of the AONB family and protected landscapes as a whole. |
| i) Providing a management role to co-ordinate AONB protection through the actions of the AONB unit, the AONB partnership and other partners at a local and strategic level. | Action and management within the AONB team to ensure provision of a first class service in supporting delivery of AONB purposes. In addition helping where appropriate partners in planning their contribution to delivery of AONB objectives. This could be via their business planning processes and other relevant documents (eg Community plans). |
| j) Developing an involvement by the community in the management of the AONB | Promoting interest, understanding and involvement in the management of the area amongst communities both inside and outside the AONB, by providing mechanisms through which their views can be heard and acted upon. |
| k) Providing landscape related planning advice | Influencing planning policies (eg, local development documents) and supplementary guidance such as design guides and development control decisions in line with AONB purposes. |

**Appendix 3: Defra Work Themes (February 2020).**

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| --- | --- |
| **Themes** | **Key** |
| Conservation of the Natural Environment | 1 |
| Conservation of Cultural Heritage | 2 |
| Recreation Management and Transport | 3 |
| Promoting Understanding, Communications and outreach | 4 |
| Rangers and Volunteers | 5 |
| Development/Planning | 6 |